

WRESTLING FORUM

DECEMBER 30, 1987

VOLUME II

ISSUE 24

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S T A F F

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ANOTHER YEAR IN THE HISTORY BOOKS

Warm greetings to you from a very cold Central Illinois! We've completed 1987, a year that will go in to the history books with mixed reviews. Wrestling has had its ups and downs all year and we'll give the commentary on that for the year book. Personal wise, 1987 is a year I'd rather forget, however Forum-wise it couldn't have been better. Thank you all for your support.

We received lots of praise for the last issue we produced and perhaps for that reason, I've dreaded doing this one. It's always impossible to follow up an issue like that with one as equally good. Sooooo...even though I've had two weeks off, I'm back to being a champion procrastinator. I have waited until after Christmas to start this one. I'll never do it again.

I'd like to take our opening space this time to thank those of you who sent in both cards and presents during the Christmas season. My collection has been improved measurably as well as my doll collection my record library. The cards ranged from tacky (Bob Shepherd and my wife tie for the tackiest) to very mellow and serene. Thanks everyone. Your thoughtfulness is something that my family and I will remember a long time.

The snow storm that hit us last issue didn't hurt too much. We managed to get the print reduced at City Hall here in Knoxville and bought the paper from a church. Late on the 16th we got to the post office only to find that mail trucks weren't even running. So much for the nonsense about snow...I guess the rain, sleet and dark of night still are in effect. Judging from the phone calls we took, delivery must have been delayed by a day or so. Oh well...

Anyway, we hope the new year is off to a prosperous start for you. Let this be just to remind you that we do publish on the 15th and 30th each month with the mailing taking place the next day. Cost (for 1988) is just \$1.25 per issue with subscriptions available in any multiple that fits your six months worth.

Not much else going on here. For Chicago readers, I may be in on the 15th of January on a little business-pleasure trip, but not sure if I'll be available to meet any of you. Should know for sure by next issue. I'll be back at work by the time all of you read so any calls between 2:30pm and 11:30 pm (my time) won't do a whole lot for me. I get home by 11:30 each night (unless we work overtime) and don't go to bed until about 1:00am so if you want to call then, go fine. Otherwise, weekends are your best bet.

We should have details next issue on ordering the yearbook. We're still in the planning stages, but I have started work on it. Let us know what you want to see in it. For those of you who joined the UAMF, a membership card should be in the mail already if you haven't received it.

Also next issue we'll be announcing the winners in our year end poll. (And type this, there are still a few categories yet to be decided (adding for votes is three days away) and I won't have time to count the votes until after the deadline for this issue. If you haven't voted, it is officially too late. The yearbook should be out at the end of January.

And finally, we haven't had an avalanche of mail from people who volunteered to do the World Class report, so at present, I will be doing it myself starting next issue. My new year's resolution is to try to be nice to them...we may break that one in record time. Now that all the piddly stuff is out of the way, let's check in with Jeff Siegel and the Wrestling Forum Barometer...

THE WRESTLING BAROMETER

DECEMBER 1987

Welcome to the December edition of the Wrestling Barometer, Wrestling Forum's exclusive census of what's hot and what's not in professional wrestling!

Participation in the Barometer continues to be good with another month's worth of solid entries. Thanks to everyone who sent in their ballots -- and to every reader who didn't, why not send one in this month and voice your opinion in wrestling's most unique, ongoing reader survey.

To quickly review the procedure that's used for tallying Barometer entries: 5 points is awarded for a first place vote, 3 points is awarded for a second place vote, 1 point is awarded for a third place vote, and 1/2 point is awarded for every item that is included on a voter's list from fourth place on. Then, a minimum point total is arbitrarily decided upon for inclusion in this column. The minimum point total allows us to focus on the month's major trends.

One more thing...your ballot may contain as many or as few choices for each category as you like.

Now that we've gotten all that out of the way, let's get on to the December results:

WHAT'S HOT

(needed to qualify: 20 points)

1. LUGER'S TURN (38 points)
2. DiBiase buying the belt angle (35 points)
3. Memphis angles (32½ points)
4. Sullivan-Steiner/Rotunda association (27 points)
5. Survivor Series (21½ points)

WHAT'S NOT

1. 37th Annual Slammys (40½ points)
2. Von Erich over America Tour (33½ points)
3. Williams-Windham angle (27 points)
4. Greg Gagne "winning" AWA belt (20 points)

NOTES: Before getting to any other commentary, a hearty congratulations to Dusty Rhodes. For the first time in the history of the Barometer, he didn't make the WHAT'S HOT list in any way, shape, or form. Then again, he didn't make the "HOT" list either, but I guess you can't have everything, Virgil...What a difference a month makes. Last month, the Survivor Series topped the down side. This month, it actually qualifies on the winner's roundup. Guess that speaks well for Vince and, in a roundabout way, serves as another black mark against Starrcade...More good news for Vince as Ted DiBiase returns to the standings with his 1984 "million Dollar Man" angle. You'll remember that Ted helped inaugurate the Barometer by finishing as the hottest "What's Hot" in each of the Barometer's first three months...So that Vince doesn't rest on his laurels for too long, however, you folks saw fit to send the Slammys right to the top of the Thumbs Down chart. Of particular irritation to most was the fact that they billed it as the 37th annual Slammys... And speaking of black marks against JCP, how bout the Williams-Windham angle. If smart fans didn't like it -- and at least you can assume that most of us at least understood why they were doing it and what was going on -- then can you imagine how it must've bombed with the marks? This is one of those cases where I'm afraid Dusty left them clueless...And on an up note for JCP, no surprise that the Luger turn topped the HOT list. It was extremely well done, and many barometer ballots also included votes for Luger's first babyface interview. Though he lost his train of thought at one point, it really didn't detract from a soliloquy that truly appeared to leave the audience speechless at times...A tip of the hat to Jerry Lawler, too. His revitalized Memphis promotion hasn't gone unnoticed this month. Also getting individual recognition was the skit where the King "pulled a gun" on Hector Guerrero. Perhaps Lazertrex should've pulled his disintegrator ray gun in return???

THE DEADLINE FOR JANUARY BALLOTS IS JANUARY 22. ENTRIES SHOULD BE SENT TO:

JEFF SIEGEL
P. O. Box 5461
Evanston, IL 60204

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

They just refuse to die. At this point, I have no idea what's holding the AWA together. There are no arenas save high school gyms for them to run in; most of the wrestlers have walked, headed for Jerry Blackwell's independent promotion in Georgia; and we have more subscribers than they do paid attendance in many locales. It sort of reminds me of the old I Love Lucy skit where Lucy and Ethel both have to die in a scene and neither wants to be the first to die.

Well, anyway, if the AWA is to survive another year, there are going to have to be some drastic changes (understatement of the year). First of all, Gagne has to hire someone who knows a little about marketing. Not so much so that they can push the product, but rather to at least comprehend why they can't draw flies. The ratings of the TV show are way down, worse than Crockett's numbers. But Verne doesn't understand TV ratings. He doesn't understand that there's only a handful of fans left watching his shows. And out of that handful, there's even less that will go to his live shows. Armed with that information, he needs to take a look at what he's serving up for the fans and figure out why they aren't buying. The situation with Tommy Rich that we mentioned last time is a prime example. Here's yet another:

DJ Peterson had given his 30 day notice before Thanksgiving. On Thanksgiving, he was in a match with Kevin Kelly where if he lost, he had to leave town. If Kelly lost, DJ got Medusa Micelli for 30 days. Everyone expects that DJ will lose since he's leaving anyway. So what happens? He wins, fercryinoutloud! Here was the perfect opportunity to explain his departure and Verne blows it by having him win. Right now, Alan West is taking Peterson's place all over the country (excuse me...in the couple of cities they've ran) complete with Medusa accompanying him to the ring. DUMB! Now Verne may have done this just to show up a few bulletin editors who had him all figured out. Real good Verne. You make yourself look twice as bad by trying to make a few others eat their words. This man is definitely not Brain Surgeon material.

At the Christmas time show in Minneapolis (complete results in the results section) Greg beat Hennig via DQ in the main event when Curt literally broke the championship belt over Greg's head. During the match Verne and Larry were strapped together outside the ring.

After the match, Verne and Larry were overheard talking. Verne wanted to run the same angle for the February 4th show only with the stip that after Greg won this time, it means that Verne would get five minutes with Larry. Larry refused, pleading with Verne to come up with a new main event for the area since they have been running Curt vs Greg on top for the last six months. Larry told him that the fans are tired of it and so was he. The question is: Will Verne listen?

The card at the Minneapolis Arena on February 4th will be what they are calling their farewell card. No not the AWA (although that may be the case by then), but rather the arena itself. It's being torn down leaving the AWA no place to run shows in their home town. Even if Titan didn't have an exclusive contract with the Met Center, the rent on the place is more than the AWA has drawn at the gate in their last couple of shows. Maybe there's a high school gym somewhere in the area that they can rent cheap.

There seems to be a problem between the AWA and Pro Wrestling This Week. I haven't talked to either side, but apparently, the bruhaha is over The Dangerously's Danger Zone segment. I guess the AWA really doesn't want it aired. They have reportedly threatened to pull their tapes from the show. Isn't that like a kid threatening to take his ball and go home when there's already fifteen other balls on the playground?

The more and more I find out about this promotion, the more it fascinates me. I find the owners (the Harts) to be very open with smart fans and in fact, in their arena program and on their TV show, they often quote Dave Meltzer. Boy is this different.

But other than that, let's get on to news from the area. First off, the feud between Jason the terrible and Zodiak (Barry orton) has come to an end as the result of a series of mask vs mask matches. Jason won them and as a result, Zodiak is history. Taking over the feud where he left off though is Bad News Allen (Coage) who stepped right into the feud by spraying yellow paint in Jason's eyes. Owen Hart has been teaming with Jason as of late, making the feud a two way feud as Allen takes Makhan Singh as his partner.

Owen will be taking some time off from this promotion to head to Japan here in the near future. Usually, when he takes off, they have a match that "injures" him: This way, after he comes back from Japan, it makes him step right into a feud with whoever and the fan anticipation is increased. This time, I understand that they will be admitting he is taking the trip, so I would expect to see him being pushed extremely hard in Japan so he can return as an "international" star this time.

Some random notes...Mike Kirschner is out for a period with some injured ribs. Bruce Hart suffered a broken shoulder recently but should be back almost by the time you read this. Brian Pillman is missing in action, but he is on holiday (their way of saying vacation).

Some new faces will be headed in sometime during the month. Among those will be Suni War Cloud and Rip Rogers with Miss Brenda. I believe they will play the babyface and heel respectively with no feuds lined up for either at this point.

The success of this promotion is something that is a well kept secret in the wrestling world. Almost everywhere they go, they manage to either sell out the arena, or they come very close. Without a doubt, they are the most successful promotion in North America with live show gates. Even Titan loses some money on a day to day basis while the Hart promotion turns a profit each day. That alone should tell you that they know what it takes to make their fans happy.

LETTERS, WE GET LETTERS

ON YEAR END AWARDS PICKS

I'd like to get one thing off my chest...the year end awards are a great idea, and I enjoyed both yours and Meltzers immensely. One thing bothers me though. I think readers are influenced way too much by Meltzer listing his favorites and you listing your choices as well as Jeff, Sean and Ed. You guys make your thoughts well enough known throughout the year as to "who's a good worker", "good interview", etc. without hammering it home one more time before the readers vote. Sure, it would take each reader longer to make his choices, but I think you would find the votes to be much more diverse and might even get you to thinking more about some of your choices. Think about listing your choices AFTER the voting deadline, but still before the yearbook comes out. How 'bout it?

-RALPH OBLOZA-

-Prospect Heights, IL-

EDITOR: HERE COMES ABOUT THE MOST WISHY WASHY ANSWER YOU EVER HEARD. I BOTH AGREE AND DISAGREE. AT FIRST, WHEN THE BALLOTS STARTING COMING IN, A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE VOTING FOR THE SAME PEOPLE I PICKED. THAT LASTED ABOUT TWO DAYS. ONE BALLOT, IN FACT, LISTED EVERY ONE OF MY CHOICES IN THE SAME ORDER. I THINK THOUGH, AFTER YOU SEE THE RESULTS OF THE BALLOTING, YOU'LL SEE THAT MY CHOICES GAVE GUIDELINES AND DID NOT INFLUENCE ANYONE (WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF JOBBER OF THE YEAR). FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE ANNOUNCER OF THE YEAR CATEGORY, I VOTED FOR DON KOES IN 3RD PLACE. AS OF 12-29 ONLY TWO OTHER PEOPLE HAVE AGREED WITH ME AND HE IS STUCK WITH 3 POINTS (REMEMBER...ONE PERSON MATCHED MY BALLOT EXACTLY)...ANOTHER EXAMPLE IS THAT I NAMED THE 8/2 TITLE CHANGE BETWEEN DIAMOND/TANAKA AND JARRETT/TRAVIS AS THE 2ND BEST MATCH OF THE YEAR. IT HAS ONLY APPEARED ON 6 OTHER BALLOTS. IT'S SOMETHING TO CONSIDER (LEAVING MY PICKS UNTIL LAST), BUT I WILL CONTINUE TO PUT STAFF MEMBER'S PICKS IN FIRST...MAINLY BECAUSE THEY DON'T DO NEARLY AS MUCH COMMENTARY AND CRITIQUE AS I DO. THANKS FOR THE INPUT...MY BRAIN IS NOW TIRED.

SOME NICE WORDS

The december 15th issue was one of the finest wrestling publications I've ever seen, newsstand rags included. It offered your own greetings, independent news, gossip, opinion, the "third Fall", Wrestlers are People Too, letters, awards, plugs, staff pictures, results, Christmas presents, UWF news, major group updates, trivia, knocks against drunk drivers, and so much more. It truly was enjoyable to read from cover to cover. As an editor myself, I know how hard it can be putting together such a solid publication. The way I see it, \$1.25 is a very small price to pay for such fine reading material. I dare anyone to try putting together a better newsletter just once, let alone bi-weekly. Just paper and stamp cost alone is about \$1.19. That leaves 6¢ for the editor to buy typing equipment, correspondence or for phone calls. It's simply an amazing job you do for 6¢. And with hardcore fans being very independent and opinionated, whatever the Forum staff prints, it runs the risk of being knocked. Though we've never met face to face, through the Forum I've learned to trust Jon. If a few paragraphs once in a while can build this kind of bond with your readers, it's far more important than some non sense about an out of touch wrestling group or star. I compliment you for opening yourself up to vulnerability.

-RAY WHEBBE-

-St. Paul, MN-

EDITOR: SIX CENTS AN ISSUE PROFIT!?! YOU'RE RIGHT. WE'RE TOO CHEAP. FROM NOW ON THE FORUM COST \$18.36 PER ISSUE. JUST KIDDING. SERIOUSLY, WE DO MAKE MORE THAN 6¢ PER ISSUE, BUT TO BE SURE, DOING A NEWSLETTER IS NO WAY TO GET RICH. BUT IT IS A WHOLE LOT OF FUN. THANKS FOR THE NICE WORDS.

ON THE TREATMENT OF THE NWA

The only thing I wish is that everyone would quit ragging on the Crocketts and Virgil. It certainly is the "hip" thing to do at this point, but let's try to give it a rest.

-DICK POURNE-

-Cleming, GA-

EDITOR: To tell you the truth, I DO GET A LITTLE SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT ALL THE NEGATIVE THINGS I WRITE ABOUT THE NWA. I WOULD LOVE TO BE ABLE TO SEE SOMETHING THEY DO, THROW MY ARMS UP IN THE AIR AND SCREAM, "I LOVE IT!!!" IF FOR NO OTHER REASON, JUST TO SEE IF I COULD DO IT AGAIN. I'M HARD ON THEM, SURE, BUT MAYBE BY ME BEING SO HARD ON THEM ALONG WITH OTHERS IT'LL MAKE THEM WANT US TO EAT OUR WORDS ENOUGH THAT THEY IMPROVE THEIR PRODUCT. I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO EAT MY WORDS IF IT IMPROVED THE QUALITY OF WRESTLING IN THE NWA.

NWA NEEDS TO LEARN TO PLAY TOUGH

I agree Crockett should have shown Starrcade 87 on free TV to screw up any success the Survivor Series had. Indeed, why doesn't the NWA just skip trying to do a PPV hit with the January 24 extravaganza and show THAT live on WTBS so as to give Titan second thoughts of trying to beat the Bunkhouse Stampede finals with their own game plan? Unfortunately that may not happen, unless Crockett wises up and gets tough in competing with the WWF.

Why indeed is the NWA bothering to move their offices to Dallas? Wasn't Charlotte good enough for them? And if they had to move in the first place, why not New England or around the New York area rather than a dead region that Fritz destroyed and which will probably destroy Crockett's promotion to boot?

-BOB SHEPHERD-

-Boston, MA-

EDITOR: SOME GOOD QUESTIONS THAT PERHAPS SOMEONE FROM THE NWA WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO. I THINK I KNOW MOST OF THE ANSWERS, BUT I'D RATHER NOT PUT WORDS IN THEIR MOUTHS.

OH NO, NOT AGAIN!!!

What is this all of a sudden? Wrestling managers running for president? First Lou Albano and now Gary Hart has gotten back in. I mean, what is Hart going to do anyway? Name Fritz Von Erich secretary of poor taste? How can anyone consider voting for a man who shaves his head and associates himself with people like the Thing? I think I'd rather vote for that guy who ran off to the Bahamas with that Rice girl than Gary Hart. That's all for now, I'll write again soon.

-EMILY LATRELLA-

-New York-

AND HOW BOUT THOSE SHAMMIES

I saw the Slammie awards, and I just know you're going to be hard on them. Granted they were in poor taste, but for the most part, we expected it to be. Besides, it was shown late at night and no little kids should have been up watching anyhow. Personally, I thought the show sucked, but please, don't go too overboard on it.

-ERIC HOYME-

-Indianapolis-

EDITOR: I BELIEVE THAT I GAVE THE SHAMMIES THE SAME AMOUNT OF RESPECT THAT THEY SHOWED TO THE VIEWING AUDIENCE. WHEN SOMEONE SETS THEMSELF UP LIKE THEY DID, THEY DESERVE EVERYTHING THAT GETS THROWN AT THEM.

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

Last issue we reported that Crockett had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy (I even learned how to spell it) which would have allowed him to reorganize his finances while under court protection. That was not exactly the case. He did not file.

The rumor of the filing was probably the strongest rumor to ever be circulated throughout the wrestling world. It seems that some moves by Crockett were taken by some as legal moves when in fact they weren't. Just like with the kid's game "telephone" where a phrase is whispered to the person beside you, the actual facts got distorted. We tried to sort out the mess, and although we were basically correct in all the speculation, we were incorrect with the actual bankruptcy story.

I received a phone call from a Crockettite a little earlier this week. This person was adamant about them NOT filing. He told me that their finances were fine although when I questioned him about the fact that guarantees were coming due for the wrestlers and that there were other debts that weren't current, he did admit that they were having some "cash flow problems". This sort of falls into the "Me thinks thou dost protest too much" category. There is some problems, but things will be worked out whether with the help of the court or not.

One of the things happening with them trying to reorganize everything is the complete overhaul of the TV show that are in syndication. From now on, the NWA show will be the same show as the UWF show; only the announcers (calling the same action) will be different. This will create some problems for those markets that carry both the NWA show (I believe it's called World Wide wrestling) and the UWF show as they won't be so anxious to carry the same program. The WTBS show will continue in its present format, i.e. taped in the studio in Atlanta while the calendar permits (the recent arena tapings were done that way due to the holidays).

It appears also that Starrcade did better than we had originally thought, however not near as well as what Dusty and company had planned on. It didn't lose money, and in fact may turn out to be close to a million dollar profit, but when you consider that they had honestly thought they would make 10 million on the show, that is well below expectations.

The bunkhouse stampede finals coming up on January 24 will be meeting with some stiff competition from a couple of fronts. This will be Crockett's first real attempt at the pay per view industry. They should have checked their calendar before booking the show. First, this is the night that the cable industry is having some sort of "Excellence in Cable Programming" awards show that many cable systems will be carrying. Now that in itself won't take away from the pay per view audience, but the fact that this awards show is being shown on the pay per view channel (let me try to make this clear...the awards show won't be on pay per view...but many systems will carry this show on the channel they usually reserve for pay per view events) will limit the number of homes able to purchase the show. Add that to the fact that Titan will counter with a free live event on the USA network, and the whole thing adds up to another show that won't do what Crockett expects it to. The cable system that we are on is one that will be carrying the awards show instead of wrestling, so if anyone can give me a report on the Stampede, let me know right away and we'll make arrangements.

Crockett must be sitting in his office wondering why he has such a string of bad luck lately. One purveyor of positive thinking defines luck as "opportunity being met with preparedness". I guess then bad luck would be opportunity being met with total lack of preparedness. Mr. Crockett should take a long hard look at that last statement before

he blindly heads into some of these ventures.

Well, let's take a look at the bunkhouse stampede finals set for January 24th. Already qualified for the finals are Big Bubba, Tully Blanchard, Arn Anderson, the Warlord, Ivan Koloff, the Barbarian, Steve Williams, Wilbur, Lex Luger, and Road Warrior Animal. On January 1 in the Omni in Atlanta, they will have the "wild card playoff" where five wrestlers who are not qualified as of yet will compete. This match will be a cage match and the only way to be eliminated is to be thrown through the door or over the top of the cage. The five that will be in this mini-stampede will be Nikita, Bobby Eaton, Dick Murdoch, Black Bart, and Dusty Rhodes. I guess that tells you who'll win that and make a Cinderella type comeback to win the whole shibang. I also received word this morning that Road Warrior Hawk won the Detroit stampede on the 26th, so I would guess that that would qualify him for the finals but you never know. I haven't heard anything on the other matches for the card, but I would guess that we'll see a Flair title defense along with a couple of other matches that will be setting up angles.

This next is something really petty, but something that bugs the heck out of me. Promotions all the time complain about bulletins revealing the business to the general public, but when they do it, it's because they had no other choice. Now in all fairness, The NWA is not one of the complaining groups. The WWF and the AWA are the worst offenders. In fact, several of the NWA people call here regularly, especially when I print erroneous information. But...the NWA gave their wrestlers from December 13-25 off. They still had to tape a TV show for airing on the 26th. It was taped on the 10th in Raleigh, NC. What happened that they revealed the business somewhat was that they were making references to something that would happen in the Omni fifteen days in the future. I say this is petty because 85% of the people watching the TBS show will assume that it was either done live or taped that day. But several people from Raleigh will be asking, "How'd they know that?"

The angle were talking about that happened in the Omni involves Luger and the four (Three?) horsemen. Lex had just won the stampede when he got Tully (the last man left with him) up in the backbreaker. Arn rushed the ring and Lex dropped Tully over the top rope for the win. Arn continued beating on Lex and was joined by Tully and JJ when out of the crowd comes Ole Anderson. He helps Lex clear the ring and the two announce that they will team together to take on Tully and Arn in the Omni on the 1st. The way it was handled live was excellent and it should draw well.

As for it having to be done that way, I think I would have preferred the way Bill Watts would have handled it. He would have broken into the regular TBS show with a special bulletin. Further hype could have been added with updates throughout the show. This way, the business would have been saved, and it might have had just a little extra impact.

The Shepherders are walking around without the UWF tag team belts nowadays. No, they didn't lose the belts in the ring...the titles were just "forgotten" about in further unifying the NWA and UWF. I had thought that eventually there would have been unification bouts for all the titles, but I guess they didn't want to go to the trouble.

I wonder what they're doing with the New Breed. They've set up two different angles with them and not done a thing more on either. The first was a feud with Jim Cornette and the Midnight Express after Jim took over Sean Royal's interview time. Later, the New Breed ran in to help out the Rock and Roll Express and wound up getting them disqualified. It looked like one of the two teams would be turning heel, but that too seems to have been forgotten. I don't really know if it's

that the New Breed keep making threats to walk or what or if it's just poor planning on the booker's part.. Either the New Breed vs Midnight or Rock and Roll would be a potentially good feud no matter who was playing the babyface role.

Dusty got himself involved in another feud, this one with Nikita as his partner against the Midnight Express. They showed the match they had on 12/10 and it really wasn't that bad. Dusty even let Nikita get a hot tag. Dusty and Nikita won via DQ, but after the match they were destroyed by the Express. They kept doing the "Divorce court" on Nikita (sort of a DDT only they immobilize the victim's shoulder and drop it on the mat instead of his head...it looks VERY painful). They got ready to do the rocket launcher on him (where Bobby climbs to the top rope and Stan "Launches" him like Superfly), but Dusty was able to crawl in the ring and play Pocohantas, saving Nikita while taking the full blow himself.

The other feud they're working is between Ric Flair and Michael Hayes. Flair made some disparaging remarks about Hayes and Atlanta, and Hayes came out during Flair's interview time to object. Hayes made some comments about having to sleep in the same bed as his mother and brothers and sisters, and I'm sure it was supposed to evoke sympathy, but somehow it sounded kinda kinky. Anyway, Tully and Arn hit him from behind and took him to the ring where they were prepared to trash him when Jim Garvin and Ron Garvin hit the ring to make the save.

I've been getting a lot of comments from readers about the way the NWA ends their show with a match in progress. It sort of reminds me of a promotion that used to operate out of Chicago and featured Bruiser's wrestlers. Bob Luce promoted it and Sam Menacher was the announcer. They'd always wait till the last three minutes for the main event and Sam would always say, "We'll bring you as much as what we can. We hope we have TV time remaining!" as if they couldn't have cut one of the squash matches. By the time they got through with the ring intros, bye bye show. I hated that then and I don't like it too well now. Imagine...they come on at 7:01 with a stampede (the NWA we're talking about now) with the end of the show scheduled for 7:05. Well, all I can say is, look what happened to Bob Luce. He's probably selling cars at Ben's now.

WRESTLERS ARE PEOPLE TOO

This issue we're going to look at some of the stars of the Central states Promotion. A couple of months back, we attended a Central states show here in Illinois, about 100 miles from here. With such a small crowd, we were able to meet and talk with some of the wrestlers quite freely. Let me say this: only one of them knew who I was and what I did. This is how I was received:

BOB GEIGEL

A very pleasant man, especially when I was complimenting him and reminiscing about seeing him close to twenty years ago in person. He has an excellent memory for when I told him that I'd seen him in Peoria Illinois, he remembered the town, the building where the match was held and even who was on the card that night. He proceeded to tell me the outcome of the match (he was right, too). He's very proud of his Central states promotion and even more proud that his boys were willing to put forth an effort for such a small crowd. He was very modest when it came to talking about his competitors, not having anything really bad to say about them, instead insisting that we watch his guys and make our comparisons from there. I wasn't too fond of him before meeting him, but now he has all of my respect as a person.

VINNIE VALENTINO

He spent a lot of time in the hallway between matches and during intermission drinking cokes. I figured that meant he wanted to talk to fans. I told him I enjoyed his work and was impressed that he worked so hard in front of such a small crowd. I think he got the idea that I was smart from that, and he clammed up.

CUBAN ASSASSIN

He played me for a Kay Fabe and growled at me when I went up to him. Being no fool, I figured he wanted to be left alone and I complied... in a hurry.

DOWNTOWN BRUNO

Bruno's the one who knew who I was. We had a mutual friend and he knew I was from that part of Illinois. When he found out I was there I think he about stained his pants. He was very cordial to me and my family, posing for pictures and talking to Mary and Kelly. However, when a couple of kids came up and asked him for his autograph, he was extremely rude, telling them to "Take a hike! Getoutahere!"

one of the BATTEN TWINS

I'm not sure which one. Talked to him after the matches for just a second and he pretended like I wasn't even there. It may have had something to do with the fact that all he was wearing was a towel (remember, my wife and kid were there with me) and someone had just stolen his sandwich.

RUFUS R JONES

I never realized how big this guy is. Friendly, but somewhat hard to understand. He mugged a lot for the other fans.

BOB BROWN

He was nice, but somehow I get the feeling only because he was told to be. I think that he would have rather been anywhere but Virginia, Illinois that night.

RIP ROGERS

Real mellow. Nothing seems to phase him. When Brown messed up the finish of their match, his attitude was, "A hundred years from now, who'll know?" He put up with me and that was about it.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS COLUMN, WRITE SOMETHING UP AND SEND IT ALONG. NAMES WITHHELD ON REQUEST.

MEMPHIS

It seems to never fail that whenever things are really poppin' here like they were last issue that by the time the current issue rolls around, things have quieted down. That's the case this time as the promotion continues to maintain its standard of excellence we've come to expect; it's just that the angles have mellowed out for just a short while.

There are several newcomers since we last spoke; Ken Wayne of the Nightmares is in. They are saying that he "represents" the Nightmares so it could be that we'll be seeing Danny Davis before too awful long as well. Originally he was scheduled in as a heel, but either the plans changed or the fans don't know enough to boo him because so far he's hearing nothing but cheers. Also, the promotion has been using some of Bill Dundee's students. Among them are Cat Garret and Todd Morton who have been opening cards in babyface matches. Cat is a big muscular black wrestler while Morton has long blonde hair. Reports are that they neither one look bad and they have been exchanging victories around the horn. The Bruise Brothers are also in, but not the original ones (Pork Chop Cash and Mad Dog Lee Boyd or Troy Graham). The two that are in (sorry, we don't have their real names) are two skinny green guys that are being "sponsored" by the group Sawyer Brown. They've been having a series of matches where they go to a draw with the Rock and Roll RPM's.

Scott Hall has returned from his tour of Japan and is currently beating Bobby Jagers in a series of loser leave town matches throughout the territory. Jagers, who recently worked a couple of independent shows, is expected to head to Continental as soon as he fulfills his commitments here. Hall in the meantime, is looking pretty good. For some reason, it seems that this guy can leave for a long time and when he comes back, he's still as over as a babyface as the day he left.

They are running another series of matches in Memphis called the King of the Ring series. It's a tournament where the winner gets a ring. Jerry Lawler has already defeated Curt Hennig in a non title tournament bout which in itself should be able to set up future matches between him and the AWA champ. The finals are scheduled to take place in Memphis just before we go to press. I'll try to have the results by the time we finish.

Looking back over the past twelve months in Memphis, one has to wonder what 1988 will bring. The Idol/Rich vs. Lawler feud was a classic that seemed to be this promotion's peak this year. Everything else paled in comparison in the fans' eyes and that tended to hurt. Things are on the uphill swing again though as we go into the new year and the novelty of the Midnight Rockers here as heels should help. After the Idol-Lawler thing, the promotion had to almost rush new lead heels into the spotlight without them getting a chance to really develop a character. This lost momentum and forced a lot of gimmicks to be used in keeping the audience.

In order for the promotion to continue to be successful, they are going to have to spread themselves around a little more. Memphis always gets the hot shows with some of the nearby towns never getting to see the top feud. A prime example was during the Idol-Lawler feud, Nashville only got two of their matches. Jarrett promotions have always been successful when promoting the smaller towns for their spot show: they send in all the big names. Their success in the smaller towns help to make up for some of the low gates they occasionally suffer in Memphis. If they remember to do this in all the cities they promote on a regular basis, 1988 should be a banner year for the promotion. Besides...it looks like they are going to be hosting a convention for wrestling fans during July. Hope to see you there.

MY TRIP TO JAPAN
or
Does Dave Meltzer Know Anything About Pro Wrestling
BY JEFF DOWDREN

I know that a lot of readers of Wrestling Forum don't follow Japanese wrestling. A lot of reasons are given, from the fact that they run no skits, so there is no break in the monotony, to the fact that there are no interviews, to the fact that you can't understand the announcers, to the fact that it's hard to keep track of who the wrestlers are. I guess each one of those issues has its valid points depending on who is bringing them up, but after getting a firsthand look, I can safely say that wrestling over in Japan is so far above the quality of its American opposition that it should be glaringly obvious. First, for those of you who don't read the Wrestling Observer, or for those of you who do and just blip over the Japanese news, let's take a brief look at the biggest names and issues that confront the Japanese wrestling scene.

There are three major promotions in Japan. NEW JAPAN, which is often thought of as Antonio Inoki's promotion; ALL JAPAN, which is headed up by the Giant Baba; and ALL JAPAN WOMEN'S WRESTLING, which is a women's group that bears absolutely no resemblance to GLOW or POWW. Before getting into the various groups, let me express some other major differences in the American and Japanese promotions. Pro wrestling in Japan is thought of much more as a sport than in the US. It's not unusual to pick up a paper in Tokyo and find pro wrestling as the lead story on the front of the sports page. It's kind of funny for a guy from Fort Lauderdale who is used to seeing Dan Marino or Don Schula on the front of the sports page to see instead Bruiser Brody or Dick Murdoch. The fans take their wrestling a lot more seriously and so do the wrestling promotions. Actual ability in the ring is given high priority, and gimmick performers are few and far between, and are usually on the bottom of the card, if at all. Most wrestlers have amateur wrestling or sumo in their backgrounds. Another difference is that in Japan, submission holds are still used (have you ever noticed that no one in the US ever gives up anymore?). To the Japanese, submitting is not seen as being weak or passive. The other main difference in the two countries is that in Japan there are really no defined babyfaces or heels except for the legendary figures like Inoki or Baba, who are of course babyfaces.

First, let's take a look at NEW JAPAN: Inoki has been on top for the better part of 20 years, even though most insiders feel that he is no longer the main star for the group. Why? Because Inoki is one of the owners of the group and is a real power play with any organization. In many respects, Inoki is like Dusty, except that he is in shape. Most wrestling experts will tell you that Inoki may be the weakest wrestler of all the headliners for the group. The group is also known as wrestling in a "harder" style, relying on more solid scientific style that bores many fans who have been brainwashed by the Titan machine. The man most responsible for this change is Akira Maeda, famous (or infamous) as the man who backed down Sotaro Sayama (the original Tiger Mask) in a shoot match, the man who found himself in a shoot with Andre the Giant, and most recently, the man who kicked the most popular wrestler in Japan, Riki Choshu, in the face with a shoot kick which resulted in Maeda being suspended, and Choshu on the injury list for a month. Maeda's aggressive style relies on moves that look as realistic as possible so consequently, gimmick performers are almost non-existent with this group. Others in this group who are generally regarded as being in the top 50 in the world are: Nobuhiko Takada (generally considered #1 in the world by Dave Meltzer), Tatsumi Fujinami, Masa Saito, Kazuo Yamazaki, Kunikida Kobayashi, Hiroshi Hase, Shiro Koshinaka, Keichi Yamada, Yoshiaki Fujiwara, Keiji Mutoh, Kengo Kimura, Masaharu Funaki, Strong Machine, Hiro Saito (no relation to Masa), and George Takano (formerly wrestled as the Cobra). As you can tell by the number of guys in the promotion who are considered top 50, this group undoubtedly has more talent than any promotion in the world. Another thing that should be taken into account, is that with the exception of Inoki, with the influence that Maeda has had, almost no one who isn't a legitimate tough guy is given a push because the potential for disaster is always there. If someone shows himself as being weak, he is constantly being challenged in the ring. Getting back to the absence of heels and babyfaces in the ring, that does not necessarily mean that there are no feuds. On the contrary, this promotion may have the best feuds in wrestling because most of them have a legit, behind the scenes heat behind them that most fans are aware of. The promotion is divided into three main groups; those being Inoki's group (Inoki, Fujinami, Kimura, Mutoh, Koshinaka, and Yamada), Choshu's group (Choshu, Masa Saito, Hase, Kobayashi, Machine, and Hiro Saito) and Maeda's group (Maeda, Takada, Fujiwara, and Yamazaki). New Japan also does not put as much importance on American talent as the other groups here. Some say that Inoki doesn't want to put an American in a position of being more over than some of the Japanese boys as in the past as with Bruiser Brody and Dynamite Kid. Biggest American stars

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for this group are Dick Murdoch, Steve Williams, Buzz Sawyer, Konga the Barbarian, the Von Erichs (But after this last tour, they probably won't be back), and the one who may get the biggest push this year, Owen Hart. Right now though, Murdoch is probably over as much as many of them and he isn't being pushed anyways near the level of Brody in 1976.

Now for the results of the Tournament: The New Japan tournament runs about a month and is round robin style. Five points are awarded for a win via pinfall or submission or a knockout; four points for a win by count out, DQ or default; two points for a draw of any kind, and no points for a loss. We join the tour with about four or five nights left to go.

11-2 in BAYONA before 9330 and a gate of about \$350,000 (wouldn't Crockett love to have this in his third or fourth best city?)...1. Akira Nogami over Tiger Katayama (D)...2. Tatsutoshi Gotoo over Youji Anjo (D)...3. Black Cat over Dynamite Chris (Chris Benoit from Calgary) (B)...4. Toshinaka/Yamazaki/Yamada over Hiro Saito/Norio Honaga/Suke Sasaki when Koshinaka german suplexed Sasaki (A)...5. Ron Ritchie over Osamu Kido (C)...6. Scott Hall over George Takanaka (B)...7. Strong Machine over Ron Starr with a "Machine Suplex" which is an armbar to a suplex and bridge (it looks as complicated as it sounds) (C)...8. Masa Saito/Fujiwara over Fujiwara/Mutoh (B)...9. Fujinami/Kimura DQOR Kerry/Kevin (the Von Erichs just in for about ten days and not in the tournament) (D)...10. Inoki/Murdoch over Nendo Nagasaki/Mr. Pogo when Murdoch got pogo in brainbuster (B)...NOTES: six man tag was a solid A and one of the top 5 matches we saw all trip...Scott Hall showing noticeable improvement and may be ready for a big push over here...Masa Saito was just awesome in the tag match...Kerry doesn't look real good but is still better than Kevin who is just awful and has no right being over here...Von Erich's theme song this night was Eurithmics' "Would I Lie to You"...write your own joke here folks...Murdoch is more over in Japan than Dusty is in the US...he looked fantastic on this tour doing flying head scissors and dropkicks.

12-4 in TOKYO at Sumo Hall...1. Sasaki over Osamu Matsuda (C)...2. Don Arakawa over Nogami (D)...3. Gotoo over Black Cat (B)...4. Takada/yamada/Yamazaki over Hiro Saito/Benoit/Tonogaa (A)...5. Strong Machine sunset flipped to victory over Scott Hall (C)...6. Seiji Sakaguchi/George Takanaka over Ron Starr/Ron Ritchie (C)...7. Von Erichs over Mutoh/Koshinaka (C- but the result is a complete miscarriage of justice)...8. Fujinami/Kimura over Nagasaki/Pogo (B)...9. Masa Saito/Fujiwara went to a 30 minute draw with Inoki/Murdoch...NOTES: Murdoch is truly fantastic in the last match completely carrying his team...last match was better than anything at the Crockett Cup...six man tag was again the best match of the night...poor Hiro Saito got whipped into the gate (steel barrier separating the crowd from ringside) every single night...Yamada did his "shooting star press" which is truly breathtaking in person...most american wrestlers confess that Fujinami is the best of the Japanese to work with (which is not surprising).

12-5 in NAGASAKI before 2100 in a building with no central heat and a temperature inside of about 40 degrees...1. Anjo over Nagami (C)...2. Sasaki over Kenichi Ooya with a power slam (C)...3. Yamada over Shunji Kosegi (B)...4. Honogaa over Benoit with a backslide (C)...5. Hiro Saito over Black Cat with a roll up (C)...6. Scott Hall over Gotoo (D) basically a squash match...7. Koshinaka/Takanaka over Starr/Ritchie (B)...8. Von Erichs over Takada/Kido when Kevin rolled up Kido (C)...9. Masa Saito/Fujiwara over Nagasaki/Pogo when Fujiwara arm barred Gotoo (C)...10. Inoki/Murdoch/Mutoh over Fujinami/Kimura/Machine when Inoki put his octopus submission on Machine...NOTES...Interesting that the smallest show to which we went had more notes than anywhere else...in the 5th match the Black Cat was a physical wreck with welts all over...give Scott Hall credit for being the victim of a back suplex in the 6th match...Starr/Ritchie would make good mid level heels in an American promotion...both get good heat...Von Erich's match may have been, for many reasons, the most interesting one we saw all tour...Takada wouldn't sell Kevin's many mistakes, and both of Fritz's boys were getting upset...At one point, Kerry yelled at Takada, "Oh, that was real professional!"...at one point after that, takada caught Kerry with some very tight kicks to the chest...Kerry looked like he'd been shot, and when Kevin comes in the ring, he screams at Takada (who is probably one of the legit toughest guys in wrestling), "Shoot your [crap], mother*(@\$)!"...Probably not the most intelligent thing Kevin has ever done, but who ever accused him of having any sense...Kerry and Kevin were also calling spots out loud. stuff like, "Don't forget to sell the discus punch big!"...Murdoch was also a scream in the last match...as he came to the ring he told Fujinami that if he messed with him, he'd be wrestling the Von Erichs the rest of the tour...Dick also called Kengo Kimura a "Kay Fabe"...at the end of the match he screamed at the ref, "It's Miller Time, Pete!"

12-6 in YAMATO before 1800 in yet another building with no heat (about 40 degrees inside)...1. Katayama over Takahiro Iizuka with a flying tackle (B)...2. Anjo Takeda over Matsuda Nogami with a side suplex and cradle...3. Arakawa over Ooya with a figure four (c)...4. Kosegi over Sasaki with a power bomb (B)...5. Gotoo by DQ over Yamada when Keichi accidentally

threw Gotoo over the outside gate (C)...Takada/Yamazaki/Kido over Hiro Saito/Black Cat/Honaga when Kido rolled up Honaga (B)...7. Koshinaka over Benoit with a butt-butt (C)...8. Fujinami over Ron Richie (squash)...9. Hall/Sakaguchi over Pogo/Nagasaki (B)...10. Von Erichs DCOR Kimura/Mutoh... (D)...11. Inoki/Murdoch/George Takano lost to Masa Saito/Fujiwara/Machine when Saito pinned Takano (C+)...NOTES: In the six amn tag poor Hiro Saito got thrown into the gate three (count 'em THREE) times...That either takes guts or stupidity...Hall threw a drop kick during his match, which is the sort of thing that impresses the Japanese fan...he also threw a couple of slaps at Pogo that were in the Flair-Garvin league...

12-7 in OSAKA for the NEW JAPAN tag tournament titles. Going into the last night, Inoki and Murdoch were in first place and Fujinami and Kimura and Saito/Fujiwara were tied for second. The way that is set up is that Fujinami and Saito's team were to meet with the winner of the match to meet Inoki's team in the same night to decide the tournament. The first match...Nugami over Katayama with a flying body press (C)...2. Arakawa over Kasugi with a small package (C)...3. Yamada/Yamazaki over Onaga/Sasaki when Yamada caught Sasaki with a chicken wing cross-face (C)...4. Gotoo over Benoit with a german suplex (B)...5. Koshinaka over Ron Richie with a butt butt (C)...6. Hall over George Takano with a power slam (B-)...7. Nagasaki/Pogo over Machine/Hiro Saito when Pogo pinned Hiro (C and the result is a total abortion)...8. Fujinami/Kimura Over Masa Saito/Fujiwara when Kimura pinned Fujiwara (A)...9 Von Erichs DCOR Takada/Mutoh (B and the Von Erich's best match on the tour)...10. Fujinami/Kimura over Inoki/Murdoch when Fujinami pinned Murdoch with an inside cradle (B+)...NOTES...The 8th match was about the 3rd best match we saw on the tour...Kimura just bled like a pig and the crowd was really into it, complete with Riki Choshu sitting at ringside... All four guys worked very hard in that match...6th match was Hall's best on the tour...only guy on the card who didn't work hard was Inoki...It's pretty amazing to watch Choshu just sit at ringside and watch the match, not doing anything, and still get heat...in the 8th match Fujinami and Fujiwara exchanged some light slaps that made Flair and Garvin look like kidstuff... all in all, a pretty great night of action.

That was the conclusion of Inoki's tournament so now we'll take a look at ALL JAPAN which is run by the Giant Baba.

ALL JAPAN relies much more on American talent, and doesn't have near the native talent of Inoki's promotion. Top American talent for this promotion include Stan Hansen, Terry Gordy, the Funks, and just returning to Baba's promotion after a struggle with Inoki are Bruiser Brody and Abdullah the Butcher. The American talent on Baba's side is older and much more legendary among Japanese fans. Brody, Abdullah, and the Funks are pretty much household names in Japan. Top talent among the Japanese are Jumbo Tsuruta (former AWA champ), Yoshiaki Yatsu (was on the 1980 Olympic team and is something of a national hero in Japan), Tiger Mask (the second one - Mitsuhara Misawa best worker in the promotion and in the top 15 in the world), Hiroshi Wajima (former sumo champion and a household name in Japan - terrible wrestler), Giant Baba (the worst looking wrestler in the world - still can work a decent match), the team of Sampson Fuyuki and Toshiaki Kawada (sort of like a Japanese version of a New Breed - both young with good potential) Genichiro Tenryu and Shira Hara (I save the team of Tenryu and Hara for last because in many ways they were the most valuable wrestlers in this promotion in 1987).

After Choshu and company jumped in the early part of the year, this was a dead promotion. Tenryu, who with Baba and Tsuruta own the promotion, pulled something of a power play by insisting on a turn to heel. Baba and Tsuruta didn't want to do it, but had no choice. Tenryu has gotten over better than anyone in the promotion could have ever dreamed of to the point that he is the most important guy in the promotion and one of the most important in the country. Tenryu is a legit tough guy and is pushing the other wrestlers in the promotion to work harder, which is of course resulting in better matches.

I saw two of Baba's cards in Japan, one which was awful and one which was great. My reports:

12-8 MAEDASHI before 3500 in an absolute freezing building, so cold that the guys didn't want to work, which was okay because the fans didn't want to take their hands out of their pockets to cheer...1. Mituo Momata over Yoshinai Aogawa (B-)...2. Isao Takagi DCOR Isamu Teranishi (D)...3. Fuyuki/Kawada over Haruka Eigen/Motoshi Okuma (B+)...4. Masa Fuchi over Inoue (D+)...5. Great Kabuki and John Tenta over Rusher Kimura and Goro Tsurumi (D)...6. Abdullah/INT over Tiger Mask/Shinichi Nakano (C-)...7. Baba/Wajima over Mark/Chris Youngblood (C-)...Hansen/Gordy over Tom Zenk/Terminator (C-)...9. Brody/Shuka won by COR over Tenryu/hara (C)...Funks over Tsuruta/Yatsu by DO (C)...NOTES: Funks and Tsuruta/Yatsu went about 28 minutes...Brody and Tenryu exchanged some vicious blasts which had to feel even worse from the fact that it was about 32 degrees inside the building...it's really amazing how over Abdullah is.

12-11 TOKYO, tournament finals before 13,200...1. Masanobu Kurisu over Tajima (B+)...2. Taranishi over Mumoto (Z)....3. Inoue/Fuchi over Eigen/Tajima by DO (C)...4. Tiger Mask/Takashi Ishikawa over Kowada/Fuyuki(B+)...5. Kimura over Takagi (D)...6. Youngblood lost to the Funks (B)...7. Shibuki/Tenta over Zenk/Terminator (C)...8. Baba/Wajima over Butcher/TNT (A - great beat)...9. Tenryu/Hara DCOR Hansen/Gordy (A and maybe the best match we saw on tour)...10. Tsruta/Yatsu over Brody/Snuka (B)...
 NOTES: Last match gave the tournament to Tsruta and Yatsu...most fans realized that the two best teams were in the 9th match...the tag match with Tiger Mask had lots of flying moves and last five minutes of it were definitely "A" material...Terry Funk was really in bad shape on his tour...people in the first couple of rows could smell the Ben Gay...the Hansen/Gordy match will be an early candidate for match of the year next year when it starts making the rounds via video tape...Most Japanese reporters and journalists think this will be the match that really gets Gordy over in Japan...The crowd was into the faceoffs between Baba and Abdullah which is a very famous feud here.....TRIVIA NOTE is that Mamuto was in the first match last night and is a terrible wrestler, is the son of Rikidozan, who is the most famous wrestler in Japanese history...that's also the only reason Mamuto has a job...MORE TRIVIA...Satoru Sayama, who is the original Tiger Mask and was considered by some experts to be the greatest wrestler of all time, is currently operating "Super Tiger's Gym" in Tokyo. Sayama was between 165-180 in his prime...I'm told he now weighs 225 so his fans will have to be content with the morion...thank the Lord for video tape...I had someone in Tokyo tell me that Brody would make the best successor for Flair as NWA champ which something interesting to think about because it'll never happen.

EDITOR'S NOTES

I think most of you know how I feel about Japanese wrestling...it's something that I like to watch, but not something that I'm "into" like a lot of you are.

I learned a lot from typing this article, and I truly hope that for those of you who don't like Japanese wrestling at all, took a little bit of time to read and try to understand just what this is all about. Jeff has done an excellent job of combining a "primer" for those of you who don't follow wrestling over there just because you could never jump into the middle of it (like coming in in the middle of a movie) and an excellent in depth report for those who have followed it for a long time.

Next issue, Jeff is going to fill us in on yet another Japanese group, this being the women's group. From what he's told me on the phone (besides the fact that he's gotten over Fallen Angel and is head over heels in love with Chigusa Naguyo) their matches are almost something you have to experience live to fully realize what they are all about.

We are not going to cover Japanese wrestling on a regular basis; I'll leave that to the master, Dave Meltzer. I know of no one in the United States that understands Japanese wrestling better than Dave and I'll even try to cover the wrestling scene over there would pale in our best efforts compared to what he can do. For those of you who are interested in more, Dave's address is PO Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009 and he charges \$1.00 for four issues of the Wrestling Observer.

We do have the possibility of receiving somewhat regular reports from Japan; one of our readers may be transferring over there soon and if he does, we will be carrying some news. I ran this article and the one coming up next issue for a couple of very good reasons: It gives you all a look at something that we're not used to and also it's not often that one of our regular correspondents like Jeff has the opportunity to take a trip like this and supply us with first hand information. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

DIPSTICK OF THE MONTH DECEMBER 1987

This one was easy. I was all set after picking up the latest issue of Pro Wrestling Illustrated to award our prestigious dipstick to the Apter folks for their "choice" for most popular wrestler of the year, Dusty Rhodes. I had my editorial all planned out and was set to blast away, but then I read the reasoning behind Dusty's "win". So instead of awarding them a dipstick, I walk away wondering who the genius is who comes up with those explanations. Although Dusty's being named most popular wrestler is pretty silly, you have to hand it to these guys for one of the best tap dance routines this side of Fred Astaire.

Even if they hadn't have had such a brilliant explanation (and no, I'm not going to tell you what it was - go buy the magazine!) the clear cut winner this time would have been the WWF for their ability to lose all the respect that they've gained over the past year with their presentation of the SHAMMIES. I thought we were past the days of pie fights and cheap humor. I guess they just had to get it out of their systems. The worst of the bunch had to be Vince McMahon who proved that his ego trips must get a bigger discount on the frequent flyers plan than Dusty's. Between his opening welcome and the song that he did, he almost caused Webster to remove the words humility and dignity from the dictionary. More rantings and ravings in the WWF report.

Honorable mentions this time go to Verne Gange for the umteenth time he's screwed around with the AWA title...Ken Mantell for being a fool for purchasing the World Class stock...Kevin and Kerry Von Erich for their antics while in Japan...and yours truly for going to press with the bankruptcy story from last issue.

CLASS ACT OF THE MONTH DECEMBER 1987

We have to know the background in this situation before we make the award...an eight year old boy sent for some merchandise from an ad in one of the Apter magazines. The stuff that came was Junk with a capital J. The father and the son wrote to the staff of PWI with their concerns not expecting to hear anything in return.

Instead, Stu Saks, editor in chief, sent them a personal reply along with some PWI merchandise to make up for the bad business dealings.

It's nice to know that a company as big as GC London Publishing Associates (who publish the Apter mags) care enough about their readers and the fans to do something of this sort for someone in this boy's position. The personal touch is something that seems to be missing from today's giant promotional wars that have the attitude of every man for himself. The fact that they responded to a single voice is something that should be not only mentioned, but loudly applauded. Nice goin' Stu (and Bill, and Craig, and Eddie!!)

Honorable mention is to Ken Mantell for buying the World Class stock (we'll wait and see how it improves before handing out any awards, however)...Stu Hart and the entire Calgary Stampede promotion for working with the newsletters...and Bob Geigel and the Central States promotion for their quick response in signing birthday cards for the UAWF.

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

When we do the year end awards for 1988, there is no doubt that the SHAMMIES will win the MOST DISGUSTING category hands down. The show did have some redeeming qualities, however they were small and few between. When Vince came on stage and announced that the show was originating from the CIRCUS MAXIMUS, that set the tone for the rest of the show. I'm not sure who Vince was doing an impression of when he opened the farce, but whoever it was must have breathed a sigh of relief when noone else could figure it out either.

So, though ranking right now (more later, I promise). Let's look at the awards they gave away...BEST ANIMAL with nominees Damien, Frankie the bird, "Mithila", and George the Animal Steele. George won. HONKY "MAN"LY AWARD for WOMAN OF THE YEAR had Sherri Martel, Moohlah, Elizabeth, "Dolly Parton" and "Yoko Ono" as the candidates. Liz won and it's a wonder that the WWF wasn't sued by the real Dolly and Yoko. BEST DRESSED was a demolition, Savage, HIM, Race and the Bulldogs competing. Jim Duggan was the presenter so naturally, Harley Race won. The resulting brawl was the highlight of the show with Duggan, Race and Heenan brawling throughout the backstage area, through the dressing rooms, in to the ring and out hall (complete with food fight) and finally through the movie when they had lowered on stage. The award for best head went to Gene Okerlund and Pam Bam Bigelow. HOGAN'S REAL AMERICAN AWARD was presented to Billy Graham. BEST HIT was for the best punch or collision (more collisions) and went to Jim Duggan for the time he and Race met on the way to the ring and Duggan hit him with the 2 x 4. Mr. Fuji, Bobby "The Brain", Jimmy Hart and Slick were all nominated for BEST MANAGER AND the winner was "none of the above". Okay. They then gave an award for BEST PERSONAL HYGIENE and winning this piece of trash was Slick, who off and tookov for sharing a toothbrush.

Next up was the annual group sing with the presentation for best song on the album following. Unfortunately, the heel contingent stole the envelope with the winner from Gene and Jesse and after passing it around, Sika ate the results.

I think they missed a few awards. That's okay, cos we're listing them here. BEST RHYTHM DURING THE GROUP SING: Virgil, who stood dead silent during the thing. BEST IMITATION OF A JAPANESE MOVIE DURING THE PYLONOME OF THE GROUP SING: Junk Yard Dog, who was at least four words behind. BEST LINE OF THE SHOW: After Gene says that we'll never know the winner of the best song, Jesse replies, "I'm sure you can hang around with Sika and pick up the results in the morning." BEST DRESSED: Jim Duggan's 2 x 4. WORST DRESSED: Hercules. LEAST DRESSED: Rick Rude who even shaved his pubic hair for his strip tease. BIGGEST ASS: Vince McMahon. BEST HIT WITH A FOOD PRODUCT: The cherry pie that Harley Race got hit in the ear with. BEST SAX IMITATION: Pam Bam Bigelow. BEST MIMIC OF THE SHOW: The credits which not only signified he end of the show but also listed Kay Fabe as the executive producer. WORST MIMIC OF THE SHOW: An 99 way tie for first. BEST HI-YO BY DUGGAN: The 213th one he did. BEST DECISION: Rick Derringer for no showing. BEST TONE: Jimmy Hart. MOST TONE DEAF: Vince McMahon THINKS CARRYING A BOMB MEANS TAKING HIS RECORD COLLECTION TO ANOTHER ROOM: Hulk Hogan. WORST DECISION: Program directors across the country who decided not to show the show at the 10:00pm time slot and put it after the regular syndicated show either in the morning or afternoon of the following day.

Speaking of that decision, I know of at least two stations nationwide who pulled the plug on the show halfway through citing "technical difficulties" as the reason. Good taste was more likely the reason. One "technical" award I forgot to include was for BEST BODY. It was won

by Rick Rude who proceeded to do a strip tease that had no business being shown on free TV. I talked with one programming director who said that the number of calls he received on this part of the program alone was overwhelming and that next year his station would not even consider buying the show. As a matter of fact, they were considering dumping the whole Titan package. That may be going a bit too far, but that just goes to show how objectionable some people found the show.

So much for the Sharmies. Other news concerns how Titan will be countering the NWA's first attempt at Pay Per View. Never missing a beat or a trick, Titan has announced that on January 24 they will broadcast a "Royal Rumble" on the USA network. To answer your first question, a royal rumble is Titan's attempt at a war games concept that they tried out in St. Louis. It failed miserably there. What happens is that two men enter and fight and every two minutes or so, another man enters the ring. However, unlike the war games, anyone can be eliminated over the top rope at any time (at least if they do it the same way they did it in St. Louis). The whole reason behind doing the show is of course to kill Crockett's attempt at a success Pay Per View venture. This one just may backfire, though. A lot of the cable operators were upset that Vince held "a loaded gun" at their heads during the battle of Thanksgiving. Now he's trying to make sure the same people that he had a volatile relationship with anyway, fail when they carry Crockett's product. Talk about playing with dynamite. When we suggested last issue that Crockett should have run Starrcade on free TV, nothing would have been wrong with that because Crockett didn't have any kind of foothold in the Pay Per View industry. But Vince does, and this could tick off quite a few of the people that he can't afford to tick off.

One of the problems of the giant promotion syndrome is that feuds don't often get a chance to conclude. It used to be that a winner, whether babyface or heel, would be the one who stayed on with the promotion while the other guy left for another. Most recent is the non-conclusion of the Islander-Strike Force. Nothing really happened to conclude the feud, yet the Islander are now being feuded with the British Bulldogs.

In what was to be a televised match, the two teams came to the ring. Heenan, Tama and Haku all objected to the presence of Mathilda. While the Bulldogs went after Heenan, the Islanders hit them from behind and basically destroyed them. They then kidnapped (dognapped?) Mathilda and took her back to the dressing room. Davey Boy and Dynamite soon followed but were too late in saving her. With Demolition feuding with Haynes and Patera, I guess that leaves the door open for the Hart Foundation for title rematches across the country.

Speaking of the Hart Foundation, one of the big rumors (and let me stress RUMOR) is that Jim Niedhart will be turning babyface to feud with Bret Hart and the new member of the Foundation, Greg Valentine. Seems backwards as the smaller guy usually plays the babyface role, but then again, the heel needs to be one that can take a good bump. I've heard this from three different sources now, so at this point it seems like a good solid rumor (remember though, Crockett's supposed bankruptcy came from fifteen or sixteen different people too).

There's about four months before Wrestlemania IV and yet the rumors of what's going to happen are flying almost out of control already. To be perfectly honest with you, I don't have any "inside" stuff on this one, and I think it's still too early to even speculate what's going to happen. Titan is known for their contingency plans and because of that, a big event like this has a lot of "red herrings" thrown out to confuse folks. Fans have been calling here with guesses ranging from Hogan losing the title to Andre at WMIV to Ted DiBiase buying the title, to Hogan dropping the strap before the event.

I guess part of the reason everyone is so up in the air about these rumors is that Hogan is supposed to be taking some time off to make a movie. Well, they have about a month off after Wrestlemania each year, and he only works TV tapings and weekend anyway (with some dates during the week but very few), so his absence wouldn't be that noticed. I think that if he were actually going to do a job, he would have done it at the Survivor series. Well, like I said, it's way to early to speculate, but it sure is a lot of fun.

Earlier in the year the WWF banned the practice of blading. According to my WWF source, they are lifting that ban "selectively". I was told that in many cases, it was almost ridiculous not to have blood (like in a cage match). What the tentative plans are is to have blood in only very special matches and only when both wrestlers have tested negatively for the AIDS virus. This way, the promotion won't lose hard core blood fans as they feel they have been once the word got around that nobody bled even in cage matches. They are reportedly going to try it this way and see how things work out. Actually, I think this compromise is about the best thing they could do. It won't completely satisfy the bloodhounds, and it will still offend those who are radically opposed to the blade (like athletic commissioners, especially in Pennsylvania), but it's still a nice solid middle ground.

I guess you know by now that Hogan refused to sell his title to DiBiase. He came out and was making a big deal on his interview about how he was tempted and how that much money could really help the poor and unfortunate little hulksters (I think he was talking about underprivileged kids) etc. etc. He even took off his belt like he was going to hand it over to DiBiase before responding with a bone shaking "Hell, NOOOOO!"

Dave Meltzer and I had an interesting conversation about this the other night. Something I hadn't realized but had accidentally alluded to a couple of times is who Ted DiBiase is playing...Vince McMahon. Tinnie is one of those who thinks money can buy anything (mainly wrestlers and exclusive contracts with arenas and pay per view circuits). He IS the Million Dollar McMahon. Now who else in the world is there that can defeat Hulk Hogan in Vince McMahon's eyes? Vince McMahon himself. With that thought in mind, who better then, than Ted DiBiase/Vince McMahon to eventually take the Hulkster's title? Like I said, too early...but fun.

Another thing I asked my source about was if Titan had any plans to combat any other Crockett attempts at pay per view (like the Crockett Cup and/or Great American Bash). He wouldn't give me a straight answer but did say that they had been playing this game "too long to take a step backwards now" and that we'd all just have to wait and see. At this point I asked him about taking a backwards step with the Shammies and he was offended. He thought (as did most of the WWF people) that the show was good. I guess it was just something they had to get out of their system. You know...like when people take Ex-Lax? Both came up with the same result.

And finally, although I don't have the results of the show as of this writing, Nick Bockwinkel was scheduled to be the special guest referee at the last Chicago card for a match between Hogan and One Man Gang (held 12-26). A lot of Chicago fans don't realize that Nick has once again adopted his heel persona as the last they knew he was a face with the AWA (a lot of Chicago doesn't have Cable TV and haven't heard Nick doing color commentary yet). That should have been interesting. Hopefully we'll have a report this issue on what happened or at least by next issue. By the way, with all our readers in the Chicagoland area, we don't have one sending us regular reports. Any volunteers from up north? We'd sure appreciate it!

NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS

This may become the DeSoto of the Wrestling Forum...only one other person sent in resolutions so let's look at her suggestions as well as my own...

Beth Sackett of Ferndale, MI had these suggestions:

- For DUSTY RHODES...to go on the Dream Away diet.
- For LEX LUGER...to learn to wrestle as well as he disrobes.
- For ALL NWA-UWF GUYS...to get through one single interview without mentioning Dusty's name.
- For DAVID CROCKETT...to stop smirking during the wrestler interviews (not too good for the marks to see).

And from your editor...

- For LEX LUGER...to bring a tank of oxygen with him to interviews for when he blows up.
- For JACK GREGORY...to show just a little emotion during exciting matches.
- For DUSTY...to make good on his threat of retirement.
- For GORILLA MONSOON...To cut his "give me a break" down to 37 times an hour.
- For VERNE GAGNE...To take marketing 101.
- For VIRGIL "SOUL TRAIN" JONES...to watch his master and learn.
- For STEVE WILLIAMS...to get back the "eye of the tiger".
- For RON GARVIN...to start pronouncing the "s"-es on the end of plural nouns.
- For MYSELF...to buy and use a dictionary.
- For THE PROP MASTER ON PRIME TIME WRESTLING...to lose Bobby Heenan's phone.
- For GEORGE STEELE...Go back to his shock treatments from Dr. Ziff.
- For ROMA & POWERS...to keep smiling until they land that Ultra-Brite commercial.
- For HULK HOGAN...to learn a new finishing move.
- For AKIRA MAEDA...to control his temper and if that fails...to head for the WWF for a match with Hogan.
- For GORDON SOLIE AND JOE PEDICINO...to move out of Tommy Rich's belly button.
- For ROBERT GIBSON...to join Toastmasters and learn another phrase than "Tell 'em brother" or "RocknRoll, Baby".
- For ADRIAN ADONIS...to go back in the closet.
- For BOB BACKLUND...to shut up and do something.

And for all our readers...to have the happiest of new years and enjoy our sport more over the next year than ever before. Thanks for being with us.

PORTLAND PULSE

BY GREG ANDERSON

The saga of the Grappler's loaded boot continues. On the 11/12 Portland card, Brian Adams had just pinned monster Brettti when Rip Oliver and the Grappler ran in to attack him. As Rip held Adams, Grappler loaded in his foot and kicked Adams in the stomach. Then the Assassin ran in and clubbed both heels with the bullrope combell, then loaded on his neck (how he always won matches on a heel but a gimmick he discarded when he turned face) and he-battered the Grappler. Assassin then unlaced and removed the offending footwear. On a post-event interview, Adams again played the toe of the boot on the announcer's desk several times, making a sound like metal hitting metal. Assassin then stated that he now knew for sure that the boot was loaded. At this point, Oliver and Grappler came in and attacked Assassin and Grappler took his boot back. After this, promoter Barry Owen came in and suggested a cage match with the two masked men on one pole and the Grappler's boot on another. The battle between the two masked men was scheduled to take place on 12/6 in Portland on the Holiday Spectacular.

Other matches on this card include Mike Miller vs Avalanche in a main match with Chris Colt locked in a small cage at ringside, a Texas made match, a title defense by the Southern Rockers and Art Barr striking his TV title trophy on the line against the returning Abudda Dein.

Another holiday special took place Christmas night in Eugene. They even ran a plug for the Portland card during the local WWF Superstars broadcast with the Grappler (booker Lon Fontana) doing the voice over in a Tony Schiavone rapid-style. The TV show was pre-empted that night and a big crowd was expected because of it.

Going back to the 12/12 show, Matt Borne returned home and earned a title shot at the Grappler by pinning Avalanche after Matt's dad, pro-pro tough Tony Borne, tripped the big man coming off the ropes. Also, Chris Colt cut the hair of Steve Doll after Avalanche interfered in their match.

On a 12/19 TV interview, Grappler was trying to get out of the cage match with the promoter Don Owen, but Don said he signed a contract and would be suspended if he did not go through with the match. I had to laugh when Don said something like he and Barry make the matches... not the Grappler.

Also on the 19th, Avalanche and Assassin had a match. As Chris Colt distracted the referee, the Grappler ran up the aisle and Avalanche grabbed the Assassin from behind. Grappler tapped his toe on the mat and went to kick the babyface masked man, but Assassin moved at the last instant, and the hooded heel kicked "Av" instead. Assassin chased Grappler out and then pinned Avalanche. Mr. Neu has been doing his share of jobs lately.

Another angle took place on 12/19. Oliver and Adams were going at it when Oliver left the ring and grabbed Adams' kendo stick from inside. Adams chased Rip back into the ring, but when he tried to reenter, Oliver nailed him with the weapon and also hit ref Sandy Barr with it. Brain managed to slam Rip into a turnbuckle, but was hit again with the stick. Adams then fell with his leg tied up in the ropes and was hanging upside down over the ring apron as Oliver then repeatedly cracked his right leg with the stick until Assassin and Mike Miller made the save. One match I forgot on the Holiday card in Portland was a kendo stick match between Adams and Oliver.

The babyface side in this area is a bit weak on interviews, with Scott Peterson and Brian Adams being the main culprits. They do a lot of tongue tripping. Gifted gabbers here are the Assassin, Grappler, Colt and Abudda Dein was very good the last time he was here as well. For his time in the biz, Art Barr isn't too bad either.

Have a happy 1988 from the Pacific Northwest!

WORLD CLASS
BY JEFF SIEGEL

It is ironic and at the same time appropriate that my final World Class column comes at this time. With the Mantell takeover in progress, it signals a natural "break in the action" if you will.

When I started writing the World Class report well over a year ago, things were--sad to say--pretty much the same. World Class was, and continues to be a promotion decimated by its supposed leader, Fritz Von Erich. Its glory days of the early 1980s are nothing more than a faint memory. Those of us who remember the "good 'ol days" can appreciate just how much World Class has slipped. It's really too bad.

As I told Jon recently, writing this report has become a drudgerous task. There is rarely, if ever, anything positive to say. That gets to be depressing. At the same time, I have learned to despise Fritz Von Erich--not because of the angles he runs or the push his kids get, but because he is a man of little, if any, character--and even less dignity.

Now, Ken Mantell will assume the reigns and I for one wish him nothing but the best of luck. No one would be happier to see him turn this promotion around than I would. It won't be easy, though. The deal states that he gets 50% of the promotion, while Kerry and Kevin get 25% apiece. Add it up and the Von Erich boys have just as much of a say in what happens as 'ol Ken does. And what was that about not falling far from the tree???

If things went according to plan on Christmas, then Kerry holds the Worth-las belt right now. His comeback has been nothing less than one of the big surprises of the year. There's no doubt that those of us who vehemently doubted his return (and I was certainly one of those doubters) owe him an apology or, at the very least, a pat on the back. For sure Kerry's still got some drawing power, limited though it maybe in many parts of the country. Maybe, just maybe Mantell can market him in a way that would make Vince Junior proud. If he's shrewd about it and Kerry's able to hack it physically, Kerry's latest reign could prove fruitful yet.

As Mantell's Wild West promotion is integrated into World Class, WCCW will pick up some talent in the process. Terry Gordy is a welcome addition to any promotion. Bill Irwin, John Tatum and Jack Victory can all still work when they want to. And with Chris Adams, Brian Adias and Eric Embry sticking around, there's definitely a nucleus to build on. What's more, Tony Atlas, Ted Arcidi and The Thing are history here--and that's addition by subtraction if it were ever the case.

After missing the World Class show in Chicago for a couple weeks, I finally discovered it again this past Sunday morning--at 11:00 AM in what was formerly the UWF's spot. It's also preceded by the Wild West hour at 10:00 AM, which used to be Power Pro's time slot. That's prime wrestling time in these parts, folks. Furthermore, the production values of the World Class show continue to improve. They're probably the closest thing going to the WWF's. If Mantell is smart, he'll really exploit this tremendous resource in a million and one different ways. Funny thing--if he'd only ask me how, I'd be more than happy to tell him.

Once again, best of luck to Mantell and all the wrestlers World Class. Who knows? If things get hot again, I might well be lured back.

RESULTS FROM ALL OVER

12-12 EDMONTON (STAMPEDE) - COURTESY OF TRENT WALTERS...
 Jerry Brown/Goldie Rogers beat Brick Bronsky...Jerry Morrow over Hashif Khan...Rhonda Singh pinned Delta Dawn...Great Gamma/Garfield Portz defeated Mr. Hito/Biff Wellington...Steve DiSalvo pinned Phil LeFleur...Bad News Allen/Makhan Singh beat Jason/Owen Hart...NOTES: Attendance: 1200 in a 1300 seat building...DiSalvo got a clean pin over LeFleur after a piledriver...Great Gamma used a cobra sleeper hold on Biff to get the victory...opps...Brick Bronski partner in the opening match was Jonathan Holiday...also got the date wrong, it was actually 12-20-87.

12-12 BALTIMORE (NWA) - COURTESY OF FRED NAARISMA...
 Sting drew the Barbarian in 15:00...Larry Zbyszko over Mighty Wilbur by count out...Nikita pinned Eddie Gilbert...Steve Williams pinned Terry Taylor...Flair beat Michael Hayes by DQ...Road Warrior Hawk won the bunkhouse stampede...NOTES: attendance 4000...Zbyszko-Wilbur had a nice ending...Wilbur was chasing Larry around the ring (outsie) and after a lap or so, Baby Doll put herself between them (hoping that would stop Wilbur). He bowled her over (she took the best bump of the night) and while he helped her up, he was counted out of the ring...stampede came down to Hawk and Bubba...Bubba had him staggering on the ropes and nailed him with a clothesline...Hawk almost went over but not quite, so Bubba backed up and tried it again, but got flipped out...during the course of the match, Lex did a short run in and fought with Arn after he had been eliminated...it didn't last longer than 30 seconds.

12-19 BROOKLYN (IWA) - COURTESY OF STEPHEN MEYERSON & MIKE RAND...Mike Sundance beat Don Rock (D)...John and Tony Storz over the Mongol and Krush (B)...Bialo the Giant beat Ox Baker (F)...Misty Blue downed Linda Dallas (C)...Amazing BoCCA beat Crazy Luke Graham by DQ (D)...Johnny Rodz vs Ron Sheik, match was declared out of control by referee (D)...Tony Atlas beat Abdullah the Butcher by DQ (C+)...NOTES: top rope broke during Baker match causing an unplanned intermission...Storz brothers received hometown heat and are impressive physical specimens...Mongol refused to tag partner Krush during match and afterwards attacked Krush...Storz brothers made the save...they did in one night what Dave Midgetti does in one week (1 win, 3 saves)...Hell manager Wendell Weatherbee was at ringside for Dallas, sheik and Abby...Abby did a run in against Rodz and Storz brothers made another save...Rodz, Atlas and Abby juiced...during Sheik's match, crowd was chanting, "JUST SAY NO!"...

12-26 DETROIT (NWA) - COURTESY OF BETH SACKETT...Black Bart drew Tim Horner in 20 minutes...Mike Rotunda beat Italian Stallion...Jimmy Garvin beat Ivan Koloff...Nikita drew Dick Murdoch in 20 minutes...Road Warrior Hawk won the stampede...NOTES: Attendance 1500...all matches were long...two time limited draws plus Garvin-Koloff went 29:30...Stampede only lasted 11:00...same ending as in Baltimore...Doc was there but didn't wrestle...he was scheduled against Black Bart, but didn't even work the stampede...fans not well pleased with product tonight for the money they spent.

12-25 ST JOE, MO (CENTRAL STATES) - COURTESY OF BRUCE GRUMMERT... Curtis Hughes beat TC Carter...Masahiro Chono pinned Chief Jay Strongbow Jr....Rufus Jones/Vinnie Valentino over Ric Patterson/Russell Sapp...Valentino won a 9 man "\$1000" battle royal...Steve Ray/Mike George defeated Cuban Assassin/El Diablo...Dave Peterson beat Bob Brown for the Central states title...NOTES: Attendance 520...no shows were Abby (who had some "family problems", Mike Stone (who was snowed in somewhere in Canada) and Colt Steele...part of Brown Peterson match is described in MISC STUFF section...Lst match bad... Chono is impressive...Mike George carried tag match.

12-26 KANSAS CITY (CENTRAL STATES) - COURTESY OF BRUCE GRUMMERT... TC Carter won by DQ over Prince Tapu...Valentino over Chono on a reversed decision...Peterson and Strongbow over Sapp and Patterson...Curtis Hughes won a football match on a reversed decision over the Cuban assassin...Mike George defended his TV title successfully against El Diablo...Steve Ray over Bob Brown by DQ...NOTES: Attendance 175...Valentino-Chono a great match...Vinnie had submitted, but Chono kept stomping and refused to stop so referee changed the decision... other reversed decision came after a ref bump, El Diablo interfered on behalf of Cuban...Mike George came in to explain what had happened and ref changed the decision.

12-27 LANDOVER, MD (WWF) - COURTESY OF CHRIS & DAVID PILUK... Horowitz beat Jerry Allen (D+)...Rougeau Bros beat Conquistadors (F)...Bass pinned Outhouse Jack (F)...Valentine defeated Beefcake (C)...midget match...DiBiase pinned Steamboat (B)... Islanders over Killer Bees (C+)...Hogan/Bigelow defeated Bundy/Andre (C)...NOTES: Rougeaus-Conquistadors had several missed moves...won match with New Breed Crotch Catcher... Hart tossed foreign object to Valentine while Beefcake was busy trying to get Hart...Virgil worked crowd well and he and Steamboat got into it...he held Ricky's legs during pin...Bigelow pinned Bundy with splash after a Hogan leg drop...Hogan and Andre only faced off once with Andre getting the better of him.

1 • 30. CHICAGO (NWA) - BY JEFF SIEGEL...Jim Garvin beat Eddie Gilbert (D-). Neither man wanted to work. Ron Simmons pinned Johnny Ace (C). Ace had a good line...he screamed to the crowd before the match, "You expect me to beat a black man...in Chicago?!?". Simmons is improving and did put together some nice combinations. Barry Windham beat Larry Zbyszko by DQ (D+). this match had the usual stalling at the beginning. The running gag through the match saw baby Doll handing her high heeled shoe to Larry and him using it repeatedly. He kept putting it in the back of his trunks to hide it from the referee. Imagine seeing this guy with a woman's show sticking out of his pants. Anyway, the ref finally caught Barry with it, but he DQ'd Larry because, I guess, after all...who had the valet with the missing shoe? Nikita drew Murdoch. Nikita used one wrestling move other than the sickle (a snap mare) and he messed that up. Murdoch was hilarious and he gets a B+. Nikita gets a WZZ. Flair pinned Sting using the ropes. Sting doesn't know how to build a match yet. Everytime he'd get momentum going, he'd look to the crowd for approval and break the spot. Flair hit him with some HARD chops. It went 18:00. Animal won the stampede. Warriors and Sheeps were last ones in. They thought they had eliminated Animal and were working on Hawk. Animal got back in and clotheslined Sheeps and Hawk went out with them. At 5:00 mark, everyone started going out. All in all, a pretty horrible show.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

Were the trivia questions THAT popular? Okay. They return. Was the predecessor to Piper's Pit and the host's name. Answer next issue. There is no prize for right answers...this is just for fun.

Next issue we're going to try to devote a page to some miscellaneous stuff we get from both Continental (Alabama) and the new WOW (World Organization of Wrestling) out of Pennsylvania. Some short notes on WOW... They are an independent, but one that could make a significant impact on the sport. They have some name talent that seem to be hard workers (of instance, the Ratten twins). The only thing is, the announcer Chris "WAIT-A-MINUTE" Love is very annoying, saying that phrase about 100 times per broadcast. They have local TV in quite a few cities throughout Continental's area and even in Nashville so they are not to be taken lightly at this point.

Our INCREDIBLY STUPID STATISTIC DEPARTMENT, Man, returns this issue, Man, and looks at Hulk Hogan, Man. During his part of the Shammies, Man, in which he made a speech to honor the Real American award, he used the word "MAN" as an interjective (as opposed to being used as a noun) FOURTEEN TIMES! Thank goodness, man, he wasn't on camera any longer than just three minutes, man.

Condolences go out to Stan Hansen who lost his home in Jackson Mississippi recently to a fire. Several stories are being bantied about including one that he escaped the home in just his underwear. The house was a total loss and that's about all we know for sure. Reportedly the cause was some sort of electrical short. The house was covered by insurance, I'm sure, however, Stan had a video tape collection that will be hard to replace. According to a friend of his, he had on tape EVERY MATCH that he had ever been in that was aired on TV. I sure wish there was something we could do to help.

Lou Albano...for PRESIDENT?!! Of What? is the first question that pops into mind. The answer: The United States of America. Quit laughing. He says he wants to prove that the other candidates are... that is...he says he wants to show...I mean...oh hell, I have no idea what he thinks he's doing but its to prove some point or another.

Jim Crockett has his Starrcade video advertisements going out already. I got my flyer on it this morning and it offers the entire line up plus a souvenir booklet for just \$30. (\$25 for tape + \$5.00 P&H). They say it should be ready about the 20th of January. I'm not sure why it took them two months to get it ready. I don't think I mentioned that other thing they're offering either...it's a calendar featuring pictures of the NWA wrestlers on each month and a picture of Missy Hyatt on the cover (in bathing suit, stretched out on a chaise-lounge). The calendar goes for \$24.95 and you get a free video tape of something called the Danger Zone (no, not Paul E's). For more information, or to get on the mailing list (which lets you know about the tapes before they hit WTS) write to Turner Home Entertainment, PO Box 77128, Atlanta, GA 30377.

Quick story about work since I've got the room...I noticed three big reels of hose sitting together one night. One was red, one white, the other blue. I asked someone what they were, and they told me that some company that builds boxing and wrestling rings uses them to run a cable through then uses them as ropes. I looked at the ticket on the hose and it listed the customer's name, but it's nobody I'd ever heard of. Must have been going for a boxing ring.

Some of you have been asking about the stories I mentioned us running a while back. Most are scheduled for 1988...How a ring is built will be done when I get back from Chicago...different levels of smart fans will be here as soon as Sean pulls it off a disc...AIDS and wrestling should be printed in early spring...and there are some reader contributions in a humorous vein that are here and waiting for a chance to appear

here. We have a lot of new readers who have requested a "glossary" of some of the terms we use here. That is also upcoming.

Here's an offer from one of our readers...if anyone is interested in receiving the 90 minute Memphis show, contact BRIAN TRAMEL at PO BOX 74, Steele, MO 63877. Or you can call him at (314) 695-2189. He should be at this number and address until the middle of January when he returns to school.

From JD McKay of PRO WRESTLING DIGEST is this update from Continental... Danny Davis won the SE title from Dutch Mantell in Montgomery when Wendell Cooley interfered to help Davis win...Downtown Bruno is in and managing Lord Humungous who they are trying to push as a super killer heel as he gets to squash jobbers two and three at a time. He and Davis are set to feud...Tom Pritchard and the Bullet are feuding with the Dirty White Boy and Jon Boyd. The heels' valet, Mystic, cut some of Tom's hair...Tracy Smothers and Steve Armstrong are getting a fair push and seem to be set to unseat area tag champs Robert Fuller and Jimmy Golden...Wendell Cooley is still "wrestling without pay" since his "contract" is owned by Dutch. These two are slated to have "contract vs loser leave matches". That is, Cooley can either win the contract or leave Continental. No real mystery there...Mink coat tournaments are being pushed with females getting to put their names in a box labeled with different wrestler's name. The wrestlers then select one name from each box and those ladies go to a special section. As a wrestler is eliminated, so is his lady until one wrestler is left. His lady then wins the mink. An interesting and good idea.

Speaking of JD, he wasn't upset at all that the NWA decided to use the name NWA PRO WRESTLING DIGEST for their new magazine. So it looks like both sides are going to co-exist peacefully, thank goodness. To subscribe to the NWA magazine you can call (214) 733-0850 or send \$24.95 for 12 issues to Box 6488, Dallas, TX 75379. It's full of colour pictures and interviews.

I have another reader request that I remember but I can't find the actual letter...it got mixed in with the year end ballots. Anyway, this person (let me know who you are) wants a copy of the program from Starrcade. Send me the info and I'll pass it along.

By the way, the year end awards are officially over. The ones that have come in in the past three days haven't been counted yet (or for that matter even looked at other than to see they were ballots) so I don't know exactly how many we ended up with but I do know we doubled last year's record of 44. Thanks to all who participated; I hope it was as much fun for you as it was for me.

Another nte from Central States...Dave Peterson has won the Central States title from Bob Brown who has turned back heel. Brown will be considered for next month's dipstick award for what he did to reader Bruce Grummert. Bob and Bruce have a long standing feud going, but this night he and Peterson brawled outside the ring with Peterson juicing heavily. Brown grabbed Bruce's coat and rubbed it in Peterson's face getting blood all over it. Raising the heat is one thing, but this one has gone too far.

Another reader wrote in and suggested Maeda for dipstick this month for his attack on Riki Choshu. We stand with our winner for a couple of reasons...true, Maeda's attack did mess up the tournament plans but that only affected Japan. The Shammyes may have caused permanent brain damage for anyone who viewed it here in this country.

Well, that's it for another edition of the Forum. Again, we hope you had a good new year and that the best is still yet to come. We'll see you here with Volume 3 Issue 1 in just a couple weeks. Bye.

WRESTLING FORUM V.1124
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repeating a favorite by popular request...
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